

The Portia Spider's Deception

The Portia spider is a master predator whose chief weapon is deception. To begin with, says Robert R. Jackson in National Geographic, the spider looks like a piece of dried leaf or foliage blown into the web. When it attacks other species of spiders, it uses a variety of methods to lure the host spider into striking range.

Sometimes it crawls onto the web and taps the silken threads in a manner that mimics the vibrations of a mosquito caught in the web. The host spider marches up for dinner and instead becomes a meal itself.

The Portia spider can actually tailor its deception for its prey. With a type of spider that maintains its home inside a rolled-up leaf, the Portia dances on the outside of the leaf, imitating a mating ritual.

Jackson writes, "Portia can find a signal for just about any spider by trial and error. It makes different signals until the victim spider finally responds appropriately--then keeps making the signal that works."

Like the Portia spider, Satan's weapon of choice is deception.